

TEXAS COMMISSION ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

# TEACHERS' GUIDE

*to Environmental  
Education Resources*





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The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has a wealth of resources for anyone interested in environmental education, including teachers, school administrators, parents, and youth-group leaders. To make these resources more accessible, we have created this pamphlet that lists and describes our educational programs, publications, and online material. For a complete listing of TCEQ publications, visit our website, at [\*\*<www.tceq.texas.gov/publications>\*\*](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/publications)



# Programs

The TCEQ offers several programs designed to actively involve people—students included—with protecting the environment.

## Take Care of Texas

Take Care of Texas is a statewide campaign that strives to involve all Texans in lifestyle and habit changes that will help improve air and water quality, conserve water and energy, reduce waste, and save individuals a little money in the process. The campaign raises awareness of how each of us can make our state a better place in which to live, work, and play. To learn more about this program, go to [takecareoftexas.org](http://takecareoftexas.org), e-mail [educate@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:educate@tceq.texas.gov), or call 512-239-3100.



## Texas Stream Team

Texas Stream Team is a network of more than 1,400 trained volunteers who collect water-quality data on the state's lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, bays, bayous, and estuaries. The program is administered through a cooperative partnership between Texas State University, the TCEQ, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). About 40 percent of Texas Stream Team monitoring groups are composed of teachers and their students. By showing students how to measure what is happening in the environment around them, Texas Stream Team helps teachers effectively present many of the abstract concepts behind biology, chemistry, and ecology.

Teachers can become Certified Water Quality Monitors by completing a three-phase training program. Students in grades K–12 and college can monitor a body of water under a qualified teacher’s supervision, with activities based on the educational objectives of the class. A teacher can go on to become a Certified Trainer, and then train students (grades 6–12 and college) to become certified monitors. As monitors, these students can form their own groups to monitor their own sites. To learn more, go to <txstreamteam.rivers.txstate.edu> or call Texas Stream Team at 877-506-1401.

## **Texas Environmental Excellence Awards (TEEA)**

If you work with kids, you know how important a good example can be. The Texas Environmental Excellence Awards recognize deserving organizations and individuals across Texas for their efforts to preserve and protect the environment. The awards are presented every spring by the TCEQ commissioners and the Texas governor. The Youth and Education categories specifically highlight the efforts of young Texans—and their educators—to prevent pollution, reduce waste, and recycle as much as possible. Applications are accepted every year between August and October. Learn more about the awards, view videos of previous winners, and apply online at <www.teea.org>. For more information, call 512-239-3100 or e-mail <awards@tceq.texas.gov>.



# Publications

## "Take Care of Texas" Publications

### *Take Care of Texas Kids (M-037)*

Vinyl sticker (3.5 in. sq.). Features the Take Care of Texas mascots, River and Sky—two Blue Lacy dogs—and carries the Take Care of Texas message.



**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, students of all ages, parents



### *Six Ways to Take Care of Texas (GI-324)*

Bookmark (2.75 x 8 in., 2-sided bilingual). Contains valuable tips for preventing pollution and preserving our natural resources.

**Suggested level:** students of all ages



### *You Can Take Care of Texas, Too! (GI-379)*

Poster (16 x 20 in., 2-sided bilingual). Featuring mascots River and Sky, this poster offers environmental tips that kids can use daily.

**Suggested level:** students grades K–6

### *River and Sky's Lone Star Activity Book (GI-380)*



### *Río y Cielo: Un libro texano de actividades (GI-380esp)*

Activity and coloring book (8.5 x 11 in., 12 pp.). With the help of mascots River and Sky, this book will help kids learn ways to care for the Texas environment.

**Suggested level:** students grades K–5

***Save Money and the Environment at Home (GI-370)***

Card (4 x 8 in., 2-sided). Contains 10 environmental tips for improving air and water quality and conserving water and energy, while saving money, too. Display it in your classroom, office, or break room using the Take Care of Texas Brochure Holder (M-042).

**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, middle- and high-school students, parents, general public

***What Do I Do With It Now? A Quick Guide to Recycling Resources (GI-288)***

Brochure (3.75 x 9 in., 6 panels). A short guide to information and resources for recycling in your community.

**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, middle- and high-school students, parents, general public

***Texas School Recycling Guide (GI-030)***

Booklet (8.5 x 11 in., 16 pp.). A guidance manual on reducing waste and starting a school recycling program. It includes specific tips for Texas schools.

**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, middle- and high-school students

***Take Care of Texas News You Can Use (PD-025)***

Monthly e-mail newsletter (8.5 x 11 in., 2–4 pp.). Provides information on current environmental issues. To subscribe, e-mail <educate@tceq.texas.gov>.

**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, middle- and high-school students, parents, general public

## **Yard-Care Publications**

### ***The “Take Care of Texas” Guide to Yard Care (GI-028)***

Leaflet (English; 8.5 x 11 in., 4 pp.). A handy guide to maintaining a healthy yard with less water, less waste, and less pollution through “grass-cycling,” mulching and composting, thoughtful landscape design, efficient irrigation, and environmentally friendly lawn and garden treatments.

**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, and groundskeepers; middle- and high-school students; parents; general public

### ***Mulching and Composting: A “Take Care of Texas” Guide (GI-036)***

Leaflet (8.5 x 11 in., 4 pp.). A handy guide with tips on mulching and composting, and ways to reduce use of water, fertilizer, and pesticides. It includes tips on worm composting, which is a convenient option for apartments.

**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, and groundskeepers; middle- and high-school students; parents; general public







***Managing 10 Common Texas Yard Pests:  
A "Take Care of Texas" Guide (GI-405)***

Leaflet (8.5 x 11 in., 4 pp.). Learn environmentally friendly ways to get rid of 10 common Texas yard pests.

**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, and groundskeepers; middle- and high-school students; parents; general public

***Managing Lawn Problems in Texas:  
A "Take Care of Texas" Guide (GI-407)***

Leaflet (8.5 x 11 in., 4 pp.). A handy guide to choosing turf, managing your lawn, and solving common lawn problems in an environmentally friendly manner.

**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, and groundskeepers; middle- and high-school students; parents; general public

## Water Publications

### ***Conserve Water: Every Drop Counts (M-036)***

Bumper sticker (9 x 3 in.). Displays the water-conservation message.

**Suggested level:** students in grades 4–8

### ***Turn Off the Faucet: Every Drop Counts (M-038)***

Vinyl static-cling sticker (4 in. sq.). Encourages Texans to “Turn off the faucet” because “Every drop counts.” Place it on restroom mirrors at school and at home to remind both students and adults to conserve water.

**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, students of all ages, parents, general public

### ***Water ReCycles: The Complete Story (GI-403)***

Poster (18 x 22 in., 2-sided). Illustrates the natural water cycle and several human influences. The back of the poster has narrative information on water, as well as activities and puzzles.

**Suggested level:** teachers, students in grades 3–12





***Rainwater Harvesting with Rain Barrels:  
A “Take Care of Texas” Guide (GI-383)***

Leaflet (8.5 x 11 in., 2 pp.). Describes how to construct a simple rain-collection system and the benefits of using rainwater for outdoor watering needs.

**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, and groundskeepers; students of all ages; parents; general public

***Landscape Irrigation:  
A “Take Care of Texas” Guide (GI-409)***

Leaflet (8.5 x 11 in., 4 pp.). Describes how to develop a water-efficient landscape, and includes tips on proper watering techniques and on choosing an irrigation system.

**Suggested level:** school administrators, teachers, and groundskeepers; middle- and high-school students; parents; general public

***A Guide to Freshwater Ecology (GI-034)***

Manual (8 x 12 in., 122 pp.). A comprehensive handbook designed to familiarize the reader with a variety of important topics related to freshwater ecosystems, including water quality and freshwater invertebrates, fish, and plants.

**Suggested level:** teachers, students in grades 7–college level

### ***Water Education Field Guide: TCEQ Guide for Engaging Students in Hands-on Field Study of Texas Waters (GI-026)***

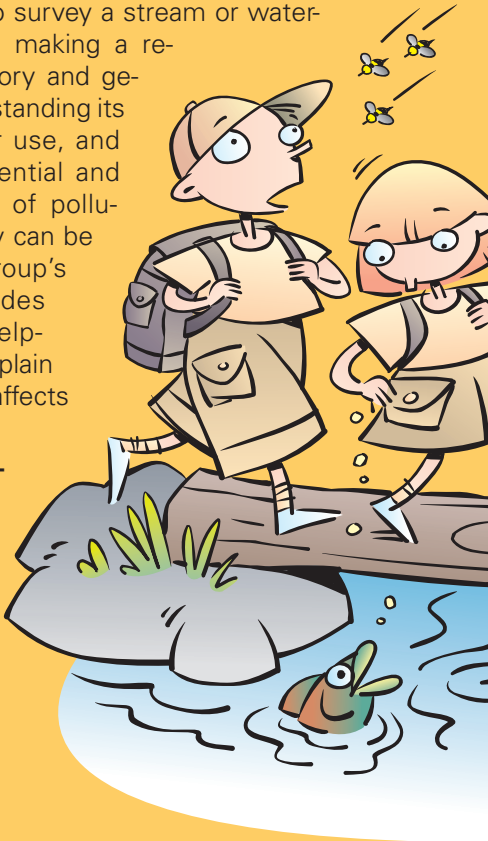
Manual (8.5 x 11 in., 66 pp.). Guides teachers through the basics of water-quality education, and contains resources, lessons, and a reference section. It can be used to introduce students to the basic concept of water quality and provides numerous suggested activities, including both one-time and long-term water-quality projects to be conducted in the classroom, in the field, or in local communities.

**Suggested level:** teachers in grades 4–8, but easily adaptable for lower or upper grades

### ***Conducting a Watershed Survey (GI-232)***

Manual (8.5 x 11 in., 42 pp.). Provides instructions on how to survey a stream or watershed, including making a record of its history and geography, understanding its land and water use, and identifying potential and actual sources of pollution. The survey can be tailored to a group's goal, and includes methods for helping teachers explain how land use affects water quality.

**Suggested level:** teachers in grades 3–12



## General Environmental Publication, Online

### *Natural Outlook*

Monthly online article (8.5 x 11 in., 1–2 pp. each). Covers a broad range of environmental issues affecting Texans and their communities. Visit <[www.tceq.texas.gov](http://www.tceq.texas.gov)> to view the article or download a printable PDF copy. You can also sign up to receive a monthly e-mail alert each time a new article is posted. Sign up online for free by visiting <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/outlook](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/outlook)>.

**Suggested level:** all audiences



# Online Resources

TakeCareOfTexas.org offers a variety of resources for adults and students, including:

- Kids' page with six interactive games
- Lesson plans for teachers K–12
- General information about environmental programs
- Step-by-step instructions for addressing common environmental situations

Also take advantage of the following features:

- Environmental Pledge: Use our built-in calculator to see how much money you could save by taking small steps to protect the environment.
- Share Your Story: For a chance at being featured on our website, submit an online message telling us how you, your class, or your family Take Care of Texas!



- Widgets: Post one of our automated widgets on your website, Facebook page, or blog. One of the widgets, for example, allows you to automatically receive an environmental tip of the week.
- Animated House: Explore the interactive house to discover different ways to protect the environment and save money in your home.
- Environmental Tips: Incorporate our 30-second PSA scripts into your morning announcements, or choose from among 50 tips to include in PTA or other newsletters.





**www.takecareoftexas.org**  
**Online Tips to Do Your Part!**

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**<www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/customersurvey>.**



GI-079  
(revised 6/11)



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